Colchester Board of Education Meeting

Minutes

Date:	Tuesday, January 14, 2014
Time:	7:00 PM
Place:	Bacon Academy Library Media Center
Board Members Present:	Ronald Goldstein, Donald Kennedy, Mary Tomasi, Brad Bernier, Michael Voiland, Student members Courtney Vitale and Mitchell Hallee **Late arrivals:** Mitchell Koziol at 7:03 and Mike Egan at 7:17
Administration Present:	Superintendent Jeff Mathieu, Principal Mark Ambruso, Principal Chris Bennett, Principal Deb Sandberg, Principal Anne Watson, Assistant Principal Linda Iacobellis, Assistant Principal Charles Hewes, Director of Teaching and Learning Barbara Gilbert, Director of Pupil Services Kathie Shaughnessy

1. **Call to Order**
   Chairman Ronald Goldstein called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

2. **Citizen Comments**
   None.

3. **Additions to the Agenda by the Board of Education**
   None.

4. **Citizens Comments on Additions to the Agenda**
   None.

5. **Approval of Minutes**
   Minutes from the December 11, 2013 Tri-Board Special Meeting, the December 12, 2013 Board of Education Regular Meeting, and the January 6, 2014 Board of Education Special Meeting were submitted for Board approval.

Motion:	D. Kennedy To approve the December 11, 2013 Tri-Board Special Meeting as read.
Seconded by:	B. Bernier
Vote:	Unanimous for those present

Motion:	M. Tomasi To approve the December 12, 2013 Board of Education Regular Meeting as read.

Seconded by: D. Kennedy
Vote: Unanimous for those present

Motion: B. Bernier
To approve the January 6, 2014 Board of Education Special Meeting as read.
Seconded by: D. Kennedy
Vote: Unanimous
Abstained: M. Koziol

6. **Communications/Correspondence**
None.

7. **Celebrations**

7.1 **Strategic Plan Goal #3:** Students, staff, parents and community members will promote a positive school environment that fosters respect, safety, and a sense of belonging**.**

- **Colchester Citizen Provides Students with Dictionaries**

Principal Deb Sandberg introduced Fred Brown. Mr. Brown has generously given dictionaries to third grade students each year for the past ten years. He attended each JJIS school program celebrating Noah Webster's birthday, handing out over 2,200 dictionaries to students over the years. Mr. Brown also engaged the students by inviting them to select a word from the dictionary and tell why they chose the word, or use the word in a sentence. Then, using a lottery system, he would select one student's entry and send the student a prize. Mr. Brown was commended for the long-lasting impression he has made on Colchester students over the past decade, especially taking into account he has no children in the district. Mr. Brown is also the Colchester Learning Foundation Board President. The Board presented him with a Certificate of Excellence.

7.2 **Strategic Plan Goal #2:** Highly effective staff will be hired, supported, valued and retained**.**

- **WJJMS Office Professional Recognized for 26 Years of Service**

WJJMS Principal Chris Bennett spoke highly of Kathy Hustus, former WJJMS Office Professional. Mrs. Hustus began work in the Colchester Public Schools in November 1987 and retired December 2013, following a 26 year career serving and supporting the students and staff in our school system. Though unable to attend tonight's meeting, the Board still commended her for her service and presented her with a Certificate of Excellence, accepted by Mr. Bennett on her behalf.

7.3 **Strategic Plan Goal #2:** Highly effective staff will be hired, supported, valued and retained.

- **Paraprofessional Recognized for Many Years of Service**

Principal Watson introduced CES paraprofessional Diane Zettervall who served the students of Colchester Public Schools for twenty years. Throughout her career within the Colchester District, Mrs. Zettervall worked in every school and was highly commended by Ms. Watson. The Board presented Mrs. Zettervall with a Certificate of Excellence and commended her on her twenty years of service.

7.4 **Strategic Plan Belief:** Students, families, schools, and community are all responsible to ensure that every student succeeds, thrives, and contributes to our changing world**.**

- **JJIS Parent is Advocate for HOT Schools**

JJIS Principal Deb Sandberg introduced Meghan Wildstein, parent of a CES kindergartner and a JJIS fourth grader. Mrs. Wildstein wrote an excellent article "***HOT is the Way***" in support of Higher Order Thinking (HOT) Schools. The article was published in the fall issue of *HOT Schools Network* and is currently featured on the State's DECD Office of Culture and Tourism HOT Schools website page. Accolades were given to Mrs. Wildstein from Principal Sandberg and the Board. Ms. Wildstein also serves a Co-President of the JJIS PTO and shared with the Board her passion for the Colchester School District. The Board presented her with a Certificate of Excellence.

8. Administrative Reports

8.1 Superintendent's Report

8.1.1 **Collaborative for Colchester's Children**

Early Childhood Coordinator Dr. Cindy Praisner provided a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the annual report and work of the Collaborative for Colchester's Children (C3) and its expenditures and projected funding goals. Currently C3 assists and supports approximately 1600 Colchester children. Dr. Praisner answered questions from the Board regarding the presentation.

Board member Mike Egan arrived during this presentation, 7:17pm.

8.1.2 **First Selectman's Round Table Recap**

Superintendent Jeff Mathieu reviewed speaking points from the First Selectman's Community Round Table Drug Forum on January 6, 2014. Superintendent Mathieu stated that he spoke about the health curriculum in grades 5, 6, 8, and 9 and the lengthy topics which are covered. He also gave community members information about the ID forums which Colchester Youth First and the schools have sponsored, the middle school and high school mentor/advisor programs, and about the SRO whose salary is paid for by the school district.

8.2 Financial Reports

8.2.1 Monthly Budget Report

D. Kennedy discussed the budget and specific line items through December 31, 2013.

8.2.2 Request for Budget Transfer - None this meeting.

8.2.3 Notification of Transfers - None this meeting

8.2.4 Health Insurance Account

D, Kennedy briefly summarized status to date.

9. Unfinished Business

9.1 **Conclusions from Action-research Project**

The Board approved an action-research project at their August 13, 2013 meeting to be conducted by WJJMS SRBI Paraprofessional Katie Kehoegreen. Ms. Kehoegreen presented her findings and conclusion on the effectiveness of instructional videos using the Khan Academy Coach five in a row tool in a Tier III intervention mathematics setting. Her research project will be used to fulfill the requirements of

the Educational Technology Master's program at Eastern Connecticut State University. Ms. Kehoegreen answered questions from the Board and was commended on her completed project.

9.2 **GMO-Free/Organic Food Petition Update**

On October 8, 2013, the Board was presented with a petition from the Bacon Academy Community Activism Class requesting that Colchester serve "GMO-free and/or Organic food alternatives in the Colchester school district cafeterias." The Board acknowledged receipt of a GMO petition and authorized Student Board members, Courtney Vitale and Mitchell Hallee, to research the feasibility of the request stated in the petition. Ms. Vitale and Mr. Hallee have been diligently working on the project and presented an update of their progress to date as well as their projected next steps. Sharon Floyd, Colchester Public Schools Food Services Supervisor, was present and contributed to the presentation also answering questions from the Board. The next update regarding this project will be in the spring.

9.3 **WJJMS Capital Needs and Building Project**

Superintendent Mathieu and Chairman Goldstein discussed ongoing WJJMS Capital Needs and the future of the Building Project and reminded and encouraged all to attend the upcoming town meeting at the Town Hall on Thursday January 16, 2014 at 7:00pm for the purpose of discussing the amended project as it moves forward.

10. New Business

10.1 Request for Leave of Absence

Ms. Rubin has been a paraprofessional in the CES preschool program since 2004. Ms. Rubin has been an active mentor of the Robotics Team 1699 for the past six years and is requesting unpaid leave to attend their April field trip if the team qualifies for the Boston tournament. Principal Watson supports the request and assures us that a qualified substitute will be available to provide support in the CES Preschool Program during her absence.

Motion: M. Tomasi
To approve a one-day unpaid leave of absence for Ms. Linda Rubin.
Seconded by: D. Kennedy
Vote: Unanimous

10.2 **BA Student Success Plan Area of Focus**

Bacon Academy Guidance Counselors Tom Racine and Christie Williams-Kahn presented and explained the proposed modification to be made to the Student Success Plan Area of Focus requirements which were approved by the Board at their February 8, 2012 meeting. The modification would be to change the "requirement" to select an area of focus to a "recommendation", though the same amount of student support will be provided regarding the student success plan area of focus.

Motion: D. Kennedy
To approve the modification of the BA Student Success Plan Area of Focus from requirement to recommendation while continuing to provide the same support and effort to students regarding focus areas.
Seconded by: M. Tomasi
Vote: Unanimous

10.3 Donations

To accept the following donations:

- Three rainbow looms from Mrs. Lynne Mancini for the benefit of the JJIS After School Club.
- $6 from the Mocksfield Family, $6 from the Smith Family, and $16 from the Snow family to benefit the JJIS grade five scholarship field trip student activity fund.
- $500 from an anonymous donor for the purchase of books for the BA English department.

Motion: D. Kennedy
To accept the donation of three rainbow looms from Mrs. Lynne Mancini for the benefit of the JJIS After School Club.
Seconded by: B. Bernier
Vote: Unanimous

Motion: D. Kennedy
To accept the donation of $6 from the Mocksfield Family, $6 from the Smith Family, and $16 from the Snow family to benefit the JJIS grade five scholarship field trip student activity fund.
Seconded by: B. Bernier
Vote: Unanimous

Motion: B. Bernier
To accept the donation of $500 from an anonymous donor for the purchase of books for the BA English department.
Seconded by: D. Kennedy
Vote: Unanimous

10.4 **Field Trip**

First Robotics Team 1699 leader Keith Deslandes and student team members Ethan Backus and Annie Ciesinski presented the Board with a short video of what the upcoming competition entails. They are asking the Board to approve following field trip:

- First Robotics Team 1699 to Boston, MA from April 10-13, 2014

Motion: M. Tomasi
To approve the First Robotics Team 1699 field trip to Boston, MA from April 10-13, 2014.
Seconded by: B. Bernier
Vote: Unanimous

10.5 **Extension of Board Policy #3240 Tuition Fees**

Superintendent Mathieu and Bacon Academy Principal Mark Ambruso addressed the Board on expanding policy #3240. The policy states "The Board of Education will permit students from other school districts to attend the Colchester Public Schools when they can be accommodated in existing classes. The student, or caregiver/parent, or sending school district, will pay a tuition fee to be established annually by the Board of Education." Mr. Mathieu and Mr. Ambruso explained that expanding upon the current policy by having more tuition-paying students attend Bacon Academy will help us maintain the curriculum and variety of course offerings at Bacon Academy in a

time of decreasing student population. In addition, area districts have informally asked whether Colchester would accept tuition-paying students from their districts. The Board discussed expansion of the policy as requested and noted that the course offerings we now have are part of what makes Bacon Academy special. The Board posed questions to administration and will discuss this further at an upcoming meeting.

10.6 **2014-15 Proposed School Year Calendar**

Superintendent Mathieu presented to the Board the proposed 2014-2015 school calendar as it was developed by the Colchester District Calendar Committee based on both EASTCONN and LEARN calendars.

Motion:	D. Kennedy To approve the 2014-15 proposed school year calendar as read.
Seconded by:	M. Tomasi
Vote:	Unanimous

10.7 **New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) BA Core Values, Beliefs, and 21st Century Learning Expectations (Mission Statement)**

Principal Ambruso and Assistant Principal Hewes presented the proposed Bacon Academy Core Values, Beliefs, and 21st Century Learning Expectations, previously known as the mission statement. This proposal is part of an on-going review, required by NEASC, for Bacon Academy's continued accreditation. BA will be submitting a Pre-Self-Study Report to NEASC, due on April 1, 2015, describing the process used to review and revise the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and 21st century learning expectations to ensure they have met the standards set by NEASC. This process included an extensive amount of feedback and input from district students, faculty and Colchester community members over the course of the past year. Though the previous mission statement has been revised and updated, the core values within the statement remain the same. The Board commended Mr. Ambruso and Mr. Hewes on their year-long commitment to this extensive process.

Motion:	M. Tomasi To approve the proposed BA Core Values, Beliefs, & 21st Century Learning Expectations (Mission Statement) as read.
Seconded by:	D. Kennedy
Vote:	Unanimous

10.8 **BA Proposed Increase in Math Credits Required for Graduation**

The Bacon Academy Math Department is proposing a change in graduation requirements beginning with the Class of 2018. Current requirement is the successful completion of three (3) credits of Mathematics. Proposed requirement is for the successful completion of a minimum of four (4) credits and four (4) years of Mathematics. BA mathematics teacher and Department Head Meaghan Kehoegreen explained the rationale for this recommendation and explained it is in alignment with new minimum standards for admission set by the Connecticut State Universities. BA graduation requirements will remain at 25 credits.

Motion:	B. Bernier To approve the proposed increase to four (4) math credits and (4) years of mathematics required for graduation, beginning with the Class of 2018.
Seconded by:	M. Egan
Vote:	Unanimous

10.9 **WJJMS-BA Integrated Science Testing Out Option**

BA Principal Mark Ambruso explained a proposal to allow incoming 9th grade students to test out of the 9th grade Integrated Science curriculum by demonstrating competency of content knowledge and skill. This will allow incoming 9th grade students to advance to Level III Biology during their freshman year. In order to be advanced to Level III Biology in the freshmen year, any interested 8th grade student must meet **all** of the presented criteria, all of the rigorous requirements and each deadline. A lengthy discussion ensued among the Board and Principals Ambruso and Bennett. The Board also requested a modification to the criteria that students achieve a passing score on the Integrated Science final examination to add an additional requirement that students will receive an item analysis of the corrected final examination with the expectation that students will need to independently remediate their areas of weakness in order to prepare for the 10th Grade Science CAPT assessment. .

Motion:	D. Kennedy To approve the WJJMS-BA Integrated Science Testing Out Option pending the student meets all of the rigorous requirements, criteria and deadlines as proposed. Also with the expectation that students will independently remediate the areas of weakness in order to prepare for the 10th grade Science CAPT assessment.
Seconded by:	B. Bernier
Vote:	Unanimous

10.10 **Request for Additional Paraprofessional Hours**

An additional three (3) hours per day for a one-on-one paraprofessional are necessary due to a DCF placement and nexus change. The Budget Committee approved this request at their January 8, 2014 meeting.

Motion:	D. Kennedy To approve the requested three (3) additional hours per day for a one-on-one paraprofessional.
Seconded by:	M. Tomasi
Vote:	Unanimous

11. Chairman's Report

11.1 Chairman Goldstein reminded Board members of the upcoming session scheduled for January 25, 2014 at 9:00am.

12. Committee Reports

None this meeting

13. Information Items

13.1 Enrollment
13.2 AASL Publishes Lesson Plan by CES Media Specialist Maureen Schlosser
13.3 CES Stuff A Bus

14. Executive Session (Enclosures/Handouts for Board Members only)

14.1 *Request for Unpaid Leave of Absence

Motion: D. Kennedy
To move into executive session.
Seconded by: B. Bernier
Vote: Unanimous. Time 10:06pm.
Chairman Goldstein brought the Board out of Executive Session at 10:10pm.

14.1 Request for Unpaid Leave of Absence
Motion: D. Kennedy
To approve a leave of absence for L. Albert.
Seconded by: B. Bernier
Vote: Unanimous.

15. Adjournment
Motion: D. Kennedy
To adjourn the meeting,
Seconded by: M. Tomasi
Vote: Unanimous.

Chairman Goldstein adjourned the meeting at 10:11pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Tamosaitis
Board Clerk